

**Working with children with different  
needs and abilities  
In  
Social/Emotional Development**

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# **Social/Emotional Development – children with different needs and abilities**

Learning how to act, interact, and react within the world around us is critically important for children who may be identified by the amount and intensity of the child's reaction when compared to children of the same age. Teachers who work with children who may be seen as having a social/emotional disorder can help them appreciate their own uniqueness by having a positive acceptance of every child. Social/emotional concerns:

- Appear over a period of time
- Occur often
- Are intense
- Exhibit behaviors inappropriate to the setting

To increase understanding about the interdependence of the world around us:

- Call each child by their name or teach the child's name via sign language
- Encourage telling about, drawing, or painting themselves and their family
- Ask the child to tell you about their favorite toy or draw it
- Get children outdoors to touch and experience nature/neighborhood
- Provide a variety of tools and media for children to make themselves, family, favorite toy, their house, an animal, etc.

Children with different abilities and needs demonstrate a variety of social-emotional behaviors that may include:

- Extreme anxiety on separation from parent
- Uncontrolled crying, throwing objects, hitting, or very passive—avoid eye contact
- Range of emotional outbursts—expressive, uncontrolled, withdrawn
- Difficulty making friends with peers
- Become dependent on one caregiver
- Lack of experience may appear as a developmental delay
- Remain in one area of the classroom or reject toys
- React strongly to routines

Teachers should address an inclusive environment, which focuses on daily life realities of teaching children with different needs and different abilities. The teacher plans the curriculum to include the individual differences represented by all children in her class and society in general.

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